

THE KOREA ADVANCE

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Senior Missionary L. C. Brannon

One of the familiar street scenes in Songdo (Kaesong) is a multitude of little Korean urchins with upturned faces and glistening eyes, listening raptly to favorite stories told by their "American grandfather," our senior missionary, Lyman Coy Brannon.

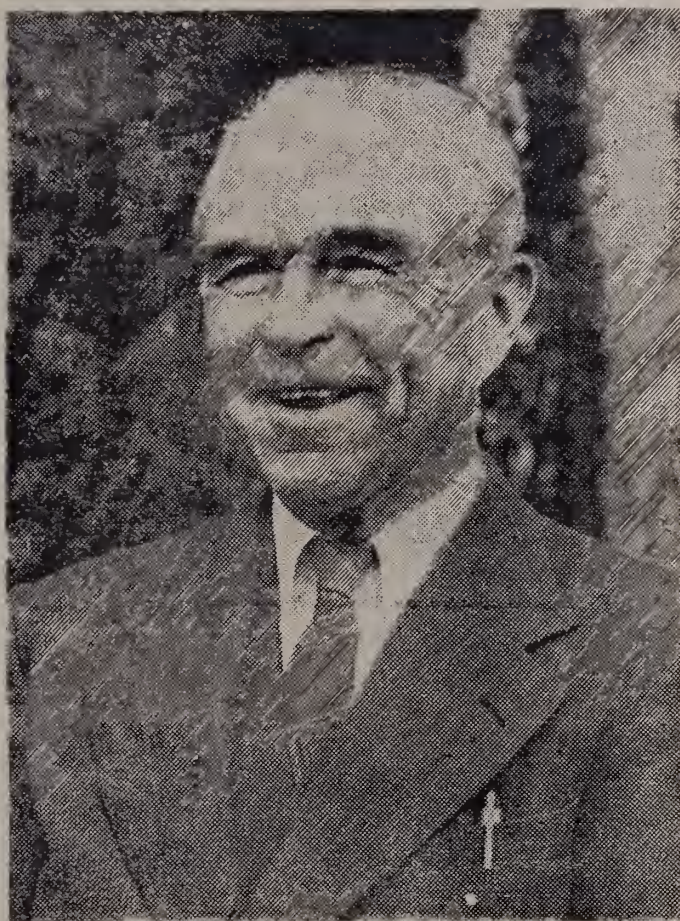
In spite of their nearly forty years of active duty, Mr. and Mrs. Brannon are among our most energetic and enthusiastic missionaries. They go about their work with a youthful spirit, a light step, and a pleasant smile. They are a continued inspiration to all whom they meet.

They are not only our honorary missionary grandparents; they are also real missionary grandparents because their daughter Margaret, her husband Carl Judy, and their two grandchildren are also among our Korea missionary families.

"Yes, times have certainly changed since I came to Korea in December, 1910," remarked Mr. Brannon with a twinkle in his eyes as he recalled some of the earlier incidents of his life here in Korea. In those early days there was no systematized language school program. The new missionary had to hire a Korean language teacher himself and direct his own studies. From the beginning, Mr. Brannon studied from fourteen to eighteen hours a day to learn the language well.

One day, soon after his arrival in Korea, he approached an old man who was carrying a load upon his back. Wishing to try out some of his new sentence patterns and to engage the man in conversation, Mr. Brannon decided to try first some of his new ministerial vocabulary. In his best Korean Mr. Brannon greeted the man by saying, "Let us talk about Jesus." To his astonishment, the old Korean replied, "Brother, these are eggs that I am carrying." Brannon had to turn away to hide his smile when he realized that the old man had not understood him. But such experiences did not keep him from learning the language. His sense of humor and love for the Korean people, and the willingness to spend long hours in study and conversation with the Koreans, have made him one of our ablest Korean linguists and also one of our best-loved missionaries, especially among the youth of the land.

In his earliest years in Korea, Mr. Brannon was a single man. But in the fall of 1911 the good news came that six new unmarried ladies were arriving in Wonsan. As was the custom then, everyone who could came to welcome the new arrivals. Among these newcomers was a Miss Myrtle Barker from Kentucky, who at first was a teacher in the Lucy Cunninggim high school. During vacations,



Yes, it's been a good forty years!

she traveled with Korean Bible-women through the villages and country churches in regular pioneer fashion, on foot and with pack-ponies. She early learned to love the Koreans, and they loved her, too.

On these occasions of country work, she tells how the Koreans would beg the missionaries for medicine. But since she was neither a doctor nor a nurse, she would give them no medicine. However, she did carry some bicarbonate of soda, and she would dispense this among those who claimed to suffer from indigestion. In later years, these patients testified that it was the best medicine they had ever received!

On July 7, 1914, Miss Barker was married to the only single man among the missionaries in all Korea, Lyman Brannon. The ceremony was a grand occasion. It was performed at the ladies' missionary home in Pai Wha in Seoul. In true pioneer fashion, after the wedding the happy newlyweds mounted their ponies and began the two-day ride to their

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The Pastor's Problems

Drought and famine

Pastor Han had aged, and he looked so thin and tired. He had changed so much during these last two years that I hardly recognized he had been a country boy, young and eager to learn, in one of my first Bible classes. He became a Christian, and I watched him grow up and helped him as he worked his way through the school and into the seminary. When he graduated, I was on hand to help ordain him, and I heard him preach his first sermon. Yes, he is a real friend, loyal and true. But I was disturbed and shocked when I saw the change that had come over him!

Mr. Han is now the pastor in a difficult place out on one of our deep-sea island circuits. He serves four churches, and he ministers to simple village folk who divide their time between fishing and farming. Since the war, travel has been difficult, so he does not come in to the mainland very often. I could see he was worried---he looked sick, and his clothing was almost in rags. And no wonder! He had had no salary for five months, and not much to eat, because this last year there had been no rain in their area. The crop had failed. Even their wells had gone dry, and drinking water was a problem. The food was all gone, and now he had come in to see if we could help them in some way.

I was glad to tell him that we had Methodist Overseas Relief money for just such needs, but as I talked with him, I reached into my pocket and handed him money for a bag of rice for his own family to take home with him to make sure that they, at least, could eat without more delay. But he did not accept the money. Instead, tears came to his eyes as he asked me how I thought he could take rice back just for his family when for months they had lived by sharing the food of the other island Christians. We arranged for quick action, and now the Methodist Overseas Relief is helping these good people keep alive until their own crops come in again, next season--provided there is no continued drought.

—A. K. Jensen

new home in Choon Chun. Before they reached there, they had been showered, but not in the usual manner. One of the ponies fell into the river, and the rider and the whole troupeau were drenched! Then, just before they reached home, a cloudburst descended upon them and gave them a second shower! Mrs. Brannon smiles as she recalls how simple their first furniture was. Much of it was made out of the wood

of their own packing crates, and it was all of their own design. Mrs. Brannon is handy with the needle, and we are told that soon she had transformed their house into a truly cozy home.

Thus began their long, useful and happy life as one of our pioneer missionary families. Through the years they have served in three of our mission stations--Choon Chun, Wonsan and Songdo--but wherever they have been, they have been loved, and their whole missionary career has been an effective one.

Mr. Brannon is an active rural evangelist. He loves to travel among the rural churches, to visit with the Korean friends, and to preach. He does that equally well in English and in Korean. Mrs. Brannon is an unusually able and capable life partner. We wonder how she can share so widely in his work and also do all she does in teaching and working in the social centers and local churches. In 1916, while they lived in Wonsan, their first child Margaret was born. When she reached school age, her mother added the task of being her daughter's school teacher to her many other duties. During these years, too, the Brannons lost two sons from their home.

Mr. Brannon likes to recall the eventful years of 1925-1923 when they returned from their second furlough in America. Those were the years when he trained Chung Choon Soo to take over the duties of the district superintendent of that district. Up to that time missionaries had been compelled to do all that supervisory and administrative work themselves; but with a Korean able to take charge, from there on Mr. Brannon could give all of his time to rural evangelism.

With the coming of 1940, Mr. Brannon was appointed delegate to the Foreign Missionary Conference in Atlantic City, New Jersey. They left Korea as usual, thinking they would be returning after a year. But war kept them in the States, where they served in the South Alabama Conference, while Mrs. Brannon also did public school work.

In the post-war years the Brannons were among our first missionary families to return to their work in Korea. These may easily be the hardest years of their whole mission career because now they are a part of a small missionary community which serves the region near Songdo. They live less than a mile from the Russian-controlled border. Almost daily they hear the gunfire from the skirmishes up on the front line. Their work is among a population which is tense, nervous, and afraid. Many of their church constituents are refugees from the North. In spite of their years, you can see the Brannons serving, helping, preaching, and loving these unfortunate people.

Yes, next year the Brannons must retire. They have reached the age limit, and they have given forty good years of devoted work to serve their Master and these Korean people. But when the Brannons do return to America, they will not easily be forgotten by their many, many Korean and missionary friends. Few people have been able to do so much for so many, and we shall all miss them. But they will be a blessing back home among you. We love them, and you will love them, too. Treat them well!

—Mrs. L. Zellers

My First Itineration Trip

It was four hours after dark on an unfamiliar road, 30 miles from Taejon, and we were flying along at the breakneckspeed of 30 miles an hour in our worn out but faithful army jeep. My language teacher and the Taejon district superintendent were sitting on the edge of their seats, eyes straight ahead, and bodies tense-- not from the speed of the jeep- but because we were travelling through thirty miles of communist infested mountains and lowlands after dark. Snow was falling and we were hoping it would not become heavy and blinding as it threatened to do at times. As I drove, my eyes searching the road for holes, I began to feel myself fighting the tension that was engulfing my companions. I must confess that it was comforting when the police at the roadside policeboxes stepped out with guns. Finally we reached Taejon and the home of the district superintendent. Thus ended my first missionary journey.

It was a beautiful day when the trip began, but such good weather was shortlived. During the night it turned severely cold. I noticed it very much as I dressed and ate in an unheated room the next morning. I had taken food with me, but it was too cold to eat just American food. The warm Korean food was tasty and satisfying.

Sometimes it was so hot (with red pepper) that it made my eyes water. In near zero weather in a cold room the hotter the food the better.

When one itinerates he leaves behind the comforts of his home. While sitting in unheated churches (some without window panes) in zero weather, I was reminded constantly that I had forgotten to bring my winter underwear.

A part of my two wee's was spent trying to think how to keep warm. I succeeded only when I adopted the method used by some Florida students at Duek--that of wearing my pajamas under my clothing. After sitting cross-legged on the floor all day, I found it difficult to find a comfortable way to rest my tired and very sore muscles as I lay on the Korean floor to sleep. This was especially true since three of us were sleeping in a room six by six, and our baggage was also stored there. Again when I had become comfortably warm, I discovered that my very kind host had built the fire under the stone floor a bit too hot and that I was soon rolling from side to side to keep from roasting! By the time I was cool, I was so twisted in my sleeping bag I could hardly breathe.

The second day brought warmer weather and with it came snow mingled with rain. I could not forget the water leak just over the accelerator for when I removed my shoes prior to entering a church or home my wet feet became only colder. Bad roads forced me to drive in second and low gears part of the time, and because gasoline was scarce I feared running out of gas. Several times we thought our trip must end, but always gas was found. There are no local Korean gas stations. We had trouble one other time

when the jeep watcher played with the gears and got them stuck in second. It took an hour of struggling and guess-work to get them to function again.

I felt a nearness to the people who listened to the long sermons of the circuit riders in near zero weather. After my short introductory speech in Korean, which I managed to do well enough to get an understanding nod from the congregation, came the pastor's ten to fifteen minute prayer, another hymn and a sermon an hour or more in length. When the sermon was completed I knew that the D. S. would call on me for the benediction (in Korean). More than once I stumbled before I could stand up for the Doxology. By the time the singing had ended the circulation in my legs had been restored.

Wherever we went we showed slide projection pictures. We wanted especially to show pictures in one mountain community for they had never seen projected pictures before. The projector needed the six volt current of the jeep battery, but the road to this community, just wide enough for the jeep, was in such bad condition. We hesitated to try the road for once started there was no backing up. We sent our baggage on by jicki and my teacher and the District Superintendent went ahead by foot. I removed the doors to facilitate escape in case the jeep should slide off the built-up road.

We did slide off the road three times, but fortunately the ditches were shallow, and we were able to get back on solid ground. After doing all this I could not reach the church. We hung a screen on the bough of a tree and set up the projector in the open air. And while a soft snow fell 150 men, women and children listened to the story of the Lord's Supper and the Good Samaritan as they watched it on the screen.

Wherever you go, there are children, children and more children. Stop your jeep near a village and they flock to it. Go anywhere and they are all around you, touching your clothes, and staring at you. Maybe the Pied Pier was a foreigner (with a jeep?).

These children always want pictures, their homes are so bare of the beautiful. The district superintendent had asked me to bring along a bunch of old Christmas cards to give away to the children. For many of them one such little card will be the only picture in the home.

I can still see the childlike expression of the pastor as he turned from looking at the cards for his pupils. "They are beautiful" he said. "I wish I was a Sundayschool student again".

Wherever I went I found churches in need of help. Because of insufficient knowledge of the language, the pastor or District Superintendent patiently explained their problems to me within the scope of my vocabulary. They never failed to make me understand how much financial assistance was needed. Nor did they fail to point out the people who gave their wedding rings or life savings to help build their church.

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OUR NEWCOMERS

The title of "our newcomers" is held at present by the Rev. and Mrs. James Walton Spitzkeit, better known in our missionary family as Pete and Betty. After a six weeks journey on a freighter, Pete and Betty were finally greeted by other missionaries at the port of Pusan on September 26th, 1949.

However, this was not the end of their journey. The long, tiring train ride from Pusan to Seoul still awaited them. It was a warm Sunday night when these two tired young missionaries reached their destination and stepped from the train in Seoul. When asked how they felt about such a long trip on their first day in Korea, their only comment was that they were glad to be able to see so much of the countryside of their new home so soon after their arrival.

These past few months have been busy ones for Pete and Betty. Their activities have ranged all the way from language study and acquainting themselves with the program of missions and the Korean Church to uncrating furniture and laying linoleum in the house where they are now living. They will live in their present home near the Methodist Seminary for at least a year while they attend language school. After that, present plans are for them to begin evangelistic work in Songdo, just south of the well known "38th Parallel".

Pete will find his experience in the rural ministry of North Carolina of great value to him in his new work here. He has also had teaching experience, having taught at Pittman Center in Sevierville, Tenn., this center being one of the Methodist Home Mission projects. Following his undergraduate work in Centenary College, he received his ministerial training at the Divinity School of Duke University in Durham, North Carolina. Pete's home in the States is Gulfport, Mississippi.

Betty is also interested and has had experience in teaching. After finishing Wooster College, Wooster, Ohio, she taught in Berlin, Connecticut. Later, she worked in the registrar's office of the Institute of Far Eastern Studies of Yale University where her father, Dr. Tewksbury is now a professor of the Chinese language. Dr. Tewksbury was formerly a missionary to China and Betty spent sixteen of her early years there also.

It was while she was working at the Institute that Pete came to the Institute to begin his study of the Korean language. The story has a happy ending; Pete and Betty were married in York Chapel on the Yale campus on June 11, 1949. A week later, in a commissioning service with other new missionaries in New York City, Pete and Betty were commissioned together by the Board of Missions of the Methodist Church to be missionaries in Korea.

Since their arrival in this country, Pete has had many opportunities to use his hobby of photography to good



Pete works hard at the Language Problem.

advantage. He is also enthusiastic about wood-working and has directed the building of an altar set to be used in the English speaking Sunday School, meeting every Sunday for the children of missionaries and E. C. A. families. Pete is also superintendent of this Sunday School, which averages in attendance each Sunday about thirty children. Betty teaches the nursery children in the same Sunday School. Her hobbies are music and sewing for which she will also find much use.

We welcome this couple into our midst and wish for them many years of fruitful and happy service in this country where they have chosen to work. —Archer Turner

(continued from page 3)

Looking at the churches now I can use one word to describe them---amoebic. They are growing, dividing into two cells, growing and dividing again. The demand for preachers, teachers, leaders, and Bible women is greater than the supply. It is marvellous how the churches are growing. The D. S. told me the Taejon District may double their number of churches this year. In many cases the refugee Christians from the north are providing the cell around which the church forms and grows.

During my trip I saw preachers entering the pulpit with clothes so patched their clothing looked like a quilt in places. Some of them were without overcoats. Their families were almost threadbare, but they were happily telling the story of the saving love of a Christ who cares for men's souls. As I listened to some of their stories of escape from North Korea and Manchuria I was told how God had saved their lives. Although short of clothing they are busy telling about this God who saves.

The spirit of Christ and His wonderful love is the spirit of our Taejon churches. Let me walk again through the valley of itineration. For when I am discouraged with language study and heavily burdened with cares, my soul shall be revived and refreshed by the daily fellowship with the Christian men and women of my districts.

—Carl W. Judy